

Message Text

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ORIGIN NEA-12

INFO OCT-01 AF-10 EUR-25 IO-14 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00

PM-07 H-03 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-07 PA-04 RSC-01

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IGA-02 ACDA-19 EB-11 MC-02 /191 R

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S/PRS-MR. KING (INFO)

AF/P-MR. LINEHAN

EUR/P-MS. ALLEN

IO/P-MR. BLACHLY

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY AMMAN

AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

AMEMBASSY CAIRO

USINT DAMASCUS

USMISSION GENEVA

USINT ALGIERS

AMEMBASSY KUWAIT

AMEMBASSY JIDDA

AMCONSUL DHAHRAN

AMCONSUL JERUSALEM

AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM

AMEMBASSY MANAMA

AMEMBASSY TEHRAN

AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI

AMEMBASSY TUNIS

AMEMBASSY RABAT

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AMEMBASSY ROME

USMISSION USUN NEW YORK
USMISSION NATO
AMEMBASSY SANAA
USINT BAGHDAD

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E.O. 11652:GDS
TAGS: MASS, SA
SUBJECT:DEPARTMENT PRESS BRIEFING

FOR YOUR INFORMATION AND GUIDANCE FOLLOWING IS PARTIAL
EXCERPT FROM DEPARTMENT SPOKESMAN'S PRESS BRIEFING
APRIL 15, 1974:

QUOTE: Q. JOHN, DO YOU KNOW ANYTHING OF A BIG U.S. ARMS AID
DEAL FOR SAUDI ARABIA?

A. YES. I THINK WHAT YOU ARE REFERRING TO IS A CONTRACT
THAT WAS SIGNED ON THE 14TH, SUNDAY, UNDER WHICH THE UNITED
STATES ARMY WILL HELP THE SAUDI GOVERNMENT MODERNIZE ITS
NATIONAL GUARD BY MECHANIZING AND RE-EQUIPPING SEVERAL
UNITS OF THE GUARD. I'VE SEEN VARIOUS FIGURES, BUT THE COST
OF THE PROGRAM, ALL OF WHICH, OF COURSE, WILL BE BORNE BY
THE SAUDI ARABIAN GOVERNMENT, IS EXPECTED TO EXCEED 300
MILLION DOLLARS OVER THE FIVE- TO SIX-YEAR PERIOD THAT THE
PROGRAM WILL BE UNDER WAY. BUT IN TERMS OF A BIG ARMS DEAL
IT'S QUITE A BIT MORE THAN JUST SALE OF U.S. MILITARY
EQUIPMENT. IT INVOLVES TRAINING AND EQUIPPING OF VARIOUS
NATIONAL GUARD UNITS.

Q. IS THAT THE EXTENT OF THE ARRANGEMENT ON THE MILITARY
SIDE NOW BETWEEN THE TWO COUNTRIES.

A. SO FAR, YES.

A. SO FAR, YES.

Q. IS THIS PART OF A NEGOTIATION TO ACHIEVE A BROADER
RANGE OF MILITARY COOPERATION?

A. THIS GOES BACK TO A LETTER OF OFFER THE UNITED STATES
MADE IN MARCH '73, OVER A YEAR AGO, TO TRAIN AND RE-
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EQUIP AND MODERNIZE THE NATIONAL GUARD OF SAUDI ARABIA.
AND THE AGREEMENT WAS JUST SIGNED. IT DOES ANTEDATE THE
JOINT DECLARATION OF APRIL 5, BUT IT IS ENTIRELY
CONSISTENT WITH THE SPIRIT OF THOSE AGREEMENTS.

Q. JOHN, THERE ALSO WAS AN OFFER BASED ON THEIR REQUEST
FOR THE SALE OF PHANTOMS. IS THAT INVOLVED IN THIS?

A. NO, NO, THAT'S NOT INVOLVED IN THIS. THIS HAS TO DO WITH MODERNIZING THE NATIONAL GUARD. AND IT DOESN'T RELATE EITHER TO THE SAUDI ARMY, WHICH IS A SEPARATE ENTITY, OR THE SAUDI AIR FORCE, A SEPARATE ENTITY.

NOW, AS I UNDERSTAND IT, THERE IS NOTHING REALLY NEW TO WHAT WE'VE SAID BEFORE ABOUT THE STATUS OF POSSIBLE SALE OF AIRCRAFT TO SAUDI ARABIA. THEY STILL HAVE TO MAKE SOME DECISIONS.

Q. WHAT EQUIPMENT IS INVOLVED HERE? DO YOU HAVE ANY BREAKDOWN OF WHAT IS IN THE 300 MILLION DOLLARS.

A. WELL, A BIG ELEMENT OF THAT IS THE TRAINING. IT WOULD INVOLVE AT SOME POINT CONSTRUCTION OF FACILITIES FOR THEM. IT WOULD HAVE, OBVIOUSLY, TRANSPORT, COMMUNICATIONS.

A Q. NO HARDWARE?

A. OH YES.

Q. JOHN, WOULD THE TRAINING TAKE PLACE MOSTLY THERE OR HERE, OR BOTH?

A. NO. TAKE PLACE MOSTLY THERE. THERE'S A U.S. ARMY TEAM THERE NOW, SMALL TEAM, AND IT WOULD BE DONE THERE.

Q. DOES THIS INCLUDE TRAINING UP AT GREAT LAKES, DO YOU KNOW?

Q. WHAT IS THE SIZE OF THE SAUDI NATIONAL GUARD?

A. I DON'T KNOW. I'M AFRAID THE INFORMATION I HAVE HERE UNCLASSIFIED

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DOESN'T PROVIDE ME THAT INFORMATION, BUT WHAT I CAN RECALL OF WHAT'S INVOLVED HERE, SEVERAL THOUSAND MEN.

Q. WHO SIGNED THE AGREEMENT?

A. I GATHER MR. AKINS DID. WELL, ON THE SAUDI SIDE IT WAS PRINCE ABDULLAH WHO WAS RESPONSIBLE.

Q. WHAT IS THE NATIONAL GUARD? IS IT A SORT OF A GENDARMARIE?

A. WELL, NO, IT'S RESPONSIBLE FOR INTERNAL SECURITY IN SAUDI ARABIA, WHICH INCLUDES PHYSICAL SECURITY OF THE OIL FIELDS, OF RELATED FACILITIES IN THE OIL INDUSTRY. IT FUNCTIONS, I GATHER, MUCH LIKE A NATIONAL POLICE

FORCE ALSO. AND IT FINALLY HAS A ROLE, I SUPPOSE SIMILAR TO OUR NATIONAL GUARD, OF JOINING THE ARMY IN DEFENSE OF THE COUNTRY IN CASE OF WAR.

Q. DOES THIS MEAN THE SENDING OF A BIG U.S. MIL GROUP OR ADDING TO THE EXISTING MIL GROUP IN ANY CONSIDERABLE NUMBERS?

A. NO, IT WOULD BE STRICTLY A TRAINING -- AND I DID MENTION SOME CONSTRUCTION THAT WOULD BE ENTAILED IN THE PROGRAM -- AND PEOPLE WOULD GO.

Q. WHAT IS MIL GROUP?

Q. MILITARY GROUP. MILITARY ADVISORY ASSISTANCE GROUP, MAG.

A. I'M NOT SURE WHAT THE COMMAND AND CONTROL WILL BE, BUT THESE PEOPLE, THE AMERICAN ARMY PEOPLE WHO GO THERE, WILL GO ASSIGNED TO THAT FUNCTION.

Q. YOU SAY A SMALL UNIT, JOHN. WHAT DO YOU MEAN BY SMALL, LIKE SEVERAL HUNDRED?

A. I CAN'T SAY YET, I DON'T KNOW.

Q. WOULD YOU HAPPEN TO KNOW IF THERE IS STILL THIS UNIT
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TRAINING UP AT GREAT LAKES NAVAL TRAINING CENTER NORTH OF CHICAGO, AVIATORS AND SAUDI FLYERS?

A. I DON'T KNOW.

Q. THIS PRINCE ABDULLAH, IS THAT THE ONE THEY USED TO CALL PRINCE FAD, THE INTERIOR MINISTER?

A. NO. I'LL HAVE TO LOOK AT HIS FULL NAME. I SAW IT YESTERDAY AND I JUST CAN'T CALL IT TO MIND. END QUOTE. KISSINGER

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